

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for taking the time to discuss the case and proposed changes to claim 7 with the undersigned. As a result of those discussions, claim 7 has been amended to recite in three instances the term "only" in a sincere attempt to distinguish patentably applicants' claimed apparatus from prior art devices. It is noted for the record that while the Office Action contains comments about the presence of the open-ended term "comprising" in the claims and applicants inquired about using a more limiting transitional term, the Examiner suggested placing focus on the heating board element. Claim 7 was changed taking that suggestion into consideration.

The rejection of claim 7 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Ohno '536 in view of Nied et al. '490, the rejection under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Ohno '536 in view of Nied et al. '490 further in view of Chapman '669, the Examiner's explanation of the rejections, and the rebuttal to applicants' arguments in the Amendment Under 37 CFR 1.116 filed January 23, 2003 are noted and have been considered. Applicants submit with respect that a reader of Nied et al. '490 would recognize that the multi-electrode element arrangement described therein is an

absolute requirement to carry out the objectives of the patentees; if the heating board were changed to be formed of a single line of heating blocks arranged in a vertical direction, one would not be able to undertake the thermoforming operation described in the patent.

Applicants direct the Examiner to the arguments on pages 5 and 6 of the Amendment Under 37 CFR 1.116 filed January 23, 2003; those arguments are believed proper then and are even more pertinent now. The Examiner is asked to bear in mind that claim 7 uses "only" in describing the heating board and the heating blocks making up the heating board. Such an arrangement is not properly taught or suggested by the cited art. The rejections should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing revisions and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that claims 7 and 8 patentably define over the cited art. The Examiner is requested to telephone the

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undersigned if additional changes are required in the case prior
to formal allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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